

CALIFORNIA SERVICE ALLIANCE (CSA) MEETING

Thursday, April 14, 2005

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

California Service Corps Office

Members Present

Laureen Anderson, Mike Brugh, Karla Crawford, Brad Duncan, Season Eckardt, Marilee Eckert, Elaine Ikeda, William Ing, Ken Larsen, David Muraki, Oscar Villegas, Marty Weinstein

Guests Present

Margaret Ahern, Veray Wickham

Federal Policy Update

David Muraki presented an update on several federal developments that impact national and community service in California.

The California Service Corps (CSC) is working with the Governor's Washington, D.C. office to keep California's congressional delegation informed about appropriations items that impact the state. The Governor's Washington office is producing a "wish list" of items that includes recommendations for national and community service programs. These recommendations are being forwarded at a time of increased pressure on domestic spending, as evidenced by the President's proposed federal fiscal year (FY) 2006 budget. Specifically, CSC has recommended (1) an increase in Senior Corps funding both nationally and in California, (2) maintaining overall AmeriCorps funding at FY 2005 levels, (3) increasing funds available for training and technical assistance to AmeriCorps and other Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) grantees, (4) funding Citizen Corps through a requirement that would set aside 2 percent of five major homeland security grants, and (5) an increase in funds for Learn and Serve America.

David also noted that a reorganization of House of Representatives appropriations subcommittees will potentially impact national service funding. Previously, responsibility for CNCS funding rested with two separate House appropriations subcommittees. The House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor – HHS) had jurisdiction over Learn and Serve America, Senior Corps and AmeriCorps*VISTA funding. The House Subcommittee on Veterans, Housing and Independent Agencies (VA-HUD) oversaw funding for the remaining AmeriCorps programs (AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC). A major reorganization of appropriations subcommittees has given jurisdiction over all CNCS programs to Labor-HHS. The reorganization has two potentially significant implications for national service. First, Labor-HHS subcommittee members will now scrutinize all national service programs alongside more traditional education funding and programs. Second, the subcommittee members are unfamiliar with AmeriCorps.

David noted that CNCS expects to release results of its first rulemaking process in June. Proposed rules are currently awaiting final approval by the Office of Management and Budget. It is expected that a subset of final rules will apply to continuing AmeriCorps programs while the remainder will go into effect for the 2006 grant cycle.

David reported that CNCS has reiterated its commitment to engaging more faith-based and community organizations (FBOs and CBOs) in its programs. At the state commission executive directors meeting, FBO advocates repeatedly declared their belief that government agencies need to dissolve “barriers” that prevent FBOs from accessing public resources. Although none of the FBO advocates could produce concrete examples of significant barriers, the emphasis on FBOs is expected to be a major focus of CNCS’ efforts in the upcoming year. CNCS is particularly interested in the “justice cluster” of prisoners, prisoner re-entry and the children of prisoners.

David also distributed a CNCS document summarizing its grant review process, mentioning that CNCS is attempting to be more transparent in its operations.

State Policy Update

David mentioned that the legislation suspending Cesar Chavez Day of Service and learning funds will expire in July 2006. He noted that the grant program might be suspended again.

Volunteer Matching Update

David reported that California is progressing in its efforts to build a statewide volunteer matching system. He also noted that the State of Michigan is building a similar system, and that California and Michigan will be partnering to pursue joint funding.

Since the working group has a fairly good grasp on the system’s design and technology, the next series of steps will focus on funding. It is estimated that the project will require approximately \$300,000 per year. CSC will be working with California United Way agencies, CNCS, the Points of Light Foundation, the State of Michigan and Volunteer Centers of California to develop funding for the project. Fundraising efforts are expected to take place over the next three months. CSA members who would like to be involved in fund development efforts – either as a general supporter or an active participant – should contact David.

Other next steps include announcement of final conclusions about potential products, discussion of the hub structure and discussion of data sharing.

Background Check/Fingerprinting Update

Several members of the fingerprinting/background check working group (Brad Duncan, Season Eckardt, Nancy Peterson and Veray Wickham) updated CSA members on development of an electronic survey designed to identify major barriers in the fingerprinting/background check process. The working group believes that survey results will enable CSA to draw general conclusions about shared difficulties and challenges faced by service and volunteerism practitioners. Group members expect that this information will enable CSA to arrange a meeting with a representative of the California Department of Justice to discuss any necessary clarification of regulations. If necessary, survey results may serve as the basis for member efforts to enact major policy changes.

Working group members shared a draft list of potential survey questions and asked that feedback be submitted to CSC (via email to William.Ing@csc.ca.gov) by Wednesday, April 27.

Several members made suggestions about the general survey process and/or CSA responses to survey results. Oscar Villegas mentioned that the National Mentoring Partnership is also addressing the fingerprinting/background check issue and suggested that it might be helpful for CSA to contact the organization. Brad Duncan noted that production of a primer on fingerprinting/background check issues might be a useful resource for the field.

CSA Material for New CSC Website

William Ing updated members on the progress of CSC's new website. CSC's new website design includes an extensive section devoted to the CSA. Components of the section will include profiles of members and links to individual organizations, key documents (Unified State Plan, James Irvine Foundation report, etc.), meeting agendas, electronic member updates, etc. William noted that CSC last collected member information such as organization profiles, logos and websites in May 2004. He requested that members whose information had significantly changed since then provide updated details as soon as possible.

Governor and First Lady's Service Award

William also provided an overview of the new Governor and First Lady's Service Award. First announced at the National Service Learning Conference in March, the award is presented by the California Service Corps in cooperation with the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation and the Points of Light Foundation.

The award will recognize youth ages 5-14 that serve for 25 hours in a 12-month period. Youth must have their service hours verified by a participating certifying organization. Organizations such as nonprofit organizations, schools, school districts, civic and fraternal groups, colleges and universities, and government agencies can be certifying organizations.

Organizations must register as certifying organizations for the President's Volunteer Service Award. There is no cost to participation.

Children recognized through the new award will receive a customized certificate signed by the Governor and First Lady Maria Shriver. Once youth receive a Governor and First Lady's Service Award, they will be encouraged to serve an additional 25 hours to earn a President's Volunteer Service Award. Although the award is currently limited to youth ages 5-14, there are plans to eventually expand the program to include older youth and adults.

Additional information on the award program can be found by visiting www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/s/california or calling 1-888-567-SERV.

Special Topic Discussion: Seniors in Service

Note: The special topic portion of April's meeting was the first in a two-part discussion on seniors and service. The April discussion focused on building an understanding of the issue through an overview of programs that engage seniors in community and national service. The second discussion will take place in June and center on national trends for seniors, California demographics and ways in which CSA members can effectively work with seniors in their programming.

Discussions about senior service take place in the broader context of demographic and cultural shifts involving members of the Baby Boom era. For example, as Baby Boomers reach retirement age, the ranks of older Californians will grow from 3.7 million to 8.9 million – a staggering 2.4 fold increase. Those who are retiring – or will soon do so – constitute a potentially large and valuable resource for communities. They also have outlooks that differ from traditional views on retirement. A study of California seniors showed that many want to learn new skills or pursue new challenges.

During the course of the afternoon, CSA members and guests provided overviews of Experience Corps, Senior Corps (the Foster Grandparent, the Retired and Senior Volunteer and Senior Companion Programs) and Seniors Assisting Youth Engaged in Service (SaYES). Laureen Anderson presented an overview of Senior Corps, the Foster Grandparent Program and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), while Margaret Ahern discussed the Senior Companion Program. Veray outlined the SaYES initiative. William summarized the Experience Corps program.

- Experience Corps: Created by Civic Ventures as a mechanism for tapping the time and skills of seniors, Experience Corps engages people ages 55 and over in service that improves literacy for K-3 youth. Experience Corps has created two general categories of program participants. One group serves for 15 or more hours per week, while another group serves on a more episodic basis (less than 15 hours per week). Seniors serving intensively (15 hours or more per week) receive modest stipends and generally have leadership roles in the program. Experience Corps programs are not directly managed by Civic Ventures, but are sponsored and overseen by local organizations that

include community-based organizations, schools, etc. Experience Corps programs may vary according to location.

- Foster Grandparent Program: Funded by CNCS, the program engages seniors ages 60 and over in service to children with special needs. Program participants (known as Foster Grandparents) must meet income requirements and serve 20 hours per week. Foster Grandparents serve in settings such as group homes, hospital intensive care units, special education classrooms, etc. Foster Grandparents receive a non-taxable hourly stipend, meal allowance, transportation reimbursement and an annual physical examination.
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program: Funded by CNCS, the program engages people ages 55 and older in a variety of community services. Program volunteers perform service such as tutoring children or adults, acting as docents for cultural events, providing support services at health centers, giving clerical support or consultant services, etc. Volunteers are covered by accident, personal and automobile liability insurance while serving.
- SaYES initiative: The initiative is a cross-stream collaboration between CNCS' Senior Corps and Learn and Serve programs. Its primary objectives are to increase the number of senior volunteers supporting service-learning and create a system to recruit senior volunteers that support service-learning. Seniors recruited through the initiative serve in schools, afterschool programs, community and faith-based organizations, colleges, universities, etc. Senior volunteers conduct public outreach, assist in coordinating events, make classroom presentations, act as classroom resources on specific projects (gardening, quilting, etc.), facilitate student reflection activities, etc. Although the initiative formally links Learn and Serve and Senior Corps, volunteer sites do not necessarily need to be Learn and Serve grantees. They do, however, need to engage in service-learning activities.
- Senior Companion Program: Also funded by CNCS, the program engages people ages 60 and over in providing services to homebound seniors. Like Foster Grandparents, program participants (known as Senior Companions) must meet income requirements and serve 20 hours per week. Senior Companions are assigned to a community-based organization or public agency and offer transportation to medical appointments, provide socialization/companionship, assist with correspondence and bills, help obtain community resources, etc. Senior Companions receive a non-taxable hourly stipend, daily meal allowance, transportation reimbursement and an annual physical examination.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled CSA conference call will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2005.